

The City of Rome Department of Community and Economic Development is pleased to present the 5-year Consolidated Plan for the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. This plan should give us, as a City, a near-term roadmap for the strategic use of CDBG funding. The plan also includes a listing of Proposed Projects to be funded for the 2010 CDBG Program Year. For the 2010 Program Year, the City anticipates receiving an estimated \$1,200,000 in Entitlement and Program Income funds.

The City of Rome is developing this plan in the midst of an unprecedented economic recession, the likes of which have not been witnessed since the 1930's. Now, more than ever, the City recognizes the critical nature of CDBG funding with respect to housing, infrastructure, and economic development. We are challenged, as a community, to not only respond to the crisis; but to capitalize on this opportunity.

In concert with the United States Congress, the City of Rome has constructed a plan aimed at not only recovery, but the gradual re-tooling of our local economy through strategic use of federal funding. We have drafted a plan that focuses on affordable and energy-efficient housing, modernized infrastructure, job training, and small business assistance. While accomplishing myriad parallel community development objectives, we believe that a plan guided by these core principles will help to stabilize our socio-economic environment while laying a solid foundation for prosperity in the new economy.

Ostensibly, CDBG cannot be all things to all people. In reality, it represents less than two percent (or 1/50th) of the City's annual budget. But what CDBG can do is provide a solid footing for suitable living conditions and economic opportunity for the neighborhoods and families that need it most. We can help provide an avenue for these neighborhoods and business districts to rebound through infrastructure improvements, energy efficient home rehabilitation, commercial rehabilitation, and crime prevention. It can also provide the wherewithal for these same families to prosper and ascend the economic ladder through job training, entrepreneur assistance, creative youth programming, and affordable housing.

In order to fully grasp the potential – and limitations – of our \$1.2M CDBG allocation, it is important to understand how the money may be spent. CDBG Funding may be used for activities that include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition and/or demolition of real property for redevelopment
- Rehabilitation of residential and commercial structures
- Street reconstructions, utility improvements, sidewalk construction, and tree planting
- Public services, such as job training or senior programs
- Activities relating to energy conservation and renewable energy resources
- Assistance to both non-profit and profit-motivated businesses to carry out economic development and job creation/retention activities.

The Department of Community & Economic Development through CDBG funds many projects that you see around town. Here are a few:

- Reconstruction of the Pinti Field Playground
- Street & utility reconstruction projects on E Thomas, N Doxtator, and Henry Streets
- Barrier Free playground and tree planting at Guyer Field
- Homeowner sidewalk assistance cost-share program
- Improvements to the Ava Dorfman and South Rome Senior Citizen Centers
- Energy Efficiency and Infrastructure Upgrades to the Capitol Theatre

- Commercial Façade improvements like Spresso's Café, Boyz From Italy, and Salon 909
- Brownfield redevelopment at the former General Cable Site - now American Alloy Steel
- Housing rehabilitation projects, including emergency assistance for senior citizens
- Youth Construction Training Project with MVCC and the WIB
- Small Business grants to Shamrock Realty, Sidekicks Karate, and La Bella Roma Boutique

Approaching these issues from a more grassroots perspective, we immediately recognized the need for expanded community involvement. The standard public hearing format and steering committee meetings were only presenting half of the picture. Public hearings and neighborhood watch meetings are sometimes difficult to attend, especially for working families. In an effort to get out into the community, we took a more modern tack. So, in addition to two public hearings, we provided citizens and agencies with the unique – and convenient - opportunity to comment from the comfort of their own home(s) or business (es).

To date, over 160 citizens, organizations, and agencies have taken the surveys. In the Public Participation Plan section of this document, you will find a summary of the comments we received. Throughout the development of this 5-year plan, we used the survey responses as a guideline for setting goals and objectives.

Our chance for successful implementation of this 5-year strategy rests in the collective ability and willingness of our community to work together toward positive change. This roadmap outlines specific goals, objectives, and benchmarks that we expect to achieve over the first half of the decade. However, we fully intend for it to remain fluid and organic in order that our community may weather the storms and capitalize on the opportunities that present themselves in this new economy.

The City of Rome stands prepared to meet the challenges – both seen and unforeseen – presented by this economic crisis through a series of strategic, targeted maneuvers. Through comprehensive planning and visioning, each dollar of CDBG funding can be leveraged two-fold with related grant opportunities and private investment. When every dollar counts, we will continue to commit to seeking out these creative funding opportunities and productive partnerships. Our CDBG funding is one component of a coordinated strategy to lay the foundation for our economic recovery.